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U.S. Air Force Reserve Role in Drug Enforcement

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U.S AIR FORCE RESERVE ROLE IN DRUG ENFORCEMENT

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The United States military was designated by the President and the Congress as the lead agency responsible for the U.S. fight against the use of illicit drugs. The force structure of the services remains uncertain, while their commitments to this struggle occupy a primary position in their planning. As an integral member of the Total Force the U.S. Air Force Reserve plays a primary role in the future of the Drug War. Reserve priorities have been restructured and training policies modified to combine required activities with operational necessities. The Air Force Reserve has accepted the challenges and adopted innovative approaches to ensure that combat readiness is maintained while making lasting contributions to the fight against the drug trade. An office has been established at Air Force Reserve Headquarters to coordinate all aspects of the reserve effort. As we move into a new and unknown future the battle against this, our newest enemy, will require the efforts of all military members. The implications on our National Security must be addressed as we restructure our missions of the future.

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AIR FORCE RESERVE ROLE IN DRUG ENFORCEMENT

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRESENT AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

In a February 1991 letter to the Congress that accompanied his National Strategy for Drug Control, President Bush conveyed the following:

This strategy lays out a comprehensive plan for Federal drug control activities for fiscal year 1992. The principal goal remains to reduce the level of illegal drug use in America. This goal cannot be achieved by the Federal Government acting alone, and so this strategy calls upon all segments of our society to continue to do their part. Although much remains to be done and serious problems still confront us, numerous indicators show that we are beginning to see significant declines in drug use throughout the Nation.¹

The use of illicit drugs and their effect on the National Security of the United States has been given the highest priority in all agencies of the federal government. No agency has been excluded and the Department of Defense will help lead the attack in the "War on Drugs." This mission will become an integral part of the mission of the Air Force Reserve as well as the active duty components of the United States military.

BACKGROUND

President Reagan recognized the threat from illicit drugs and the national security implications from the growing use and sophistication of the drug culture. He signed NSDD 221 declaring the international drug trade a threat to the national security of the United States.² This declaration opened the door for a full scale attack on all aspects of the problem. On September 5, 1989 President Bush reaffirmed the government's position when he presented to the Congress and the American people his National Drug Control Strategy. The Congress, in response to the President's declaration, named the Department of Defense as the lead agency for the overall strategy for the attack on the use and supply of illegal drugs. Secretary of Defense Cheney followed suit, elevating the drug issue to the highest priority in the Department of Defense.³

To understand how this seemingly private or individual problem can be applicable to the mission of the military, it is necessary to explore the framework of the national security policies and their structure. The enormous sums of money involved and the resources spent in furthering the drug trade have direct implications on the security of the United States as well as our allies. The drug cartels are pursuing efforts to corrupt governments friendly to the United States, thereby creating situations that involve security ramifications for us.

The central governments of some countries have lost their effectiveness and control of their policies due to the unrelenting brutal and destructive acts of the drug cartels. When the relations between the United States and our neighbors deteriorate or becomes less effective there can be grave consequences to the citizens of our country. Security pacts and alliances can become worthless when the support of the government is in question.⁴

Besides the obvious effects on other countries and their relationships with the U.S. the impact of the problem within our own borders is great. In the United States alone, each year, the cost of illicit drugs exceeds \$200 billion. This figure includes the lost productivity of American workers as well as the costs associated with trying to enforce the laws against illegal drug use. Taking these factors into account, the translation to our national security interest becomes apparent. No nation, even one as powerful and influential as the United States, can afford to have this much of its national resources lost to such a debilitating problem. The profitability must be removed from the drug trade to get the problem under control and eventually eliminate it from the scene.

When Secretary Cheney announced the role of the Department Of Defense in the drug war it was not obvious how the U.S. military was going to carry out its new assignment. Historically the military has handled the drug problem within

its own ranks, testing soldiers, rehabilitating offenders, and educating them on the dangers of drug use. Until recently the military's involvement outside the services has been extremely limited, if not non-existent. This has now changed with the increased involvement with other federal agencies in addition to direct support to foreign governments. The gameplan for future United States military involvement in all aspects of the attack on drugs has yet to be developed in its entirety, but great strides are made constantly. Reacting to the President and the Secretary and their endorsements of the use of the military has forced all the services to review their policies and change the way that they do business. The Air Force Reserve is an integral part of the equation. Reserve units are capable of providing unique contributions through their own initiative in addition to providing support through their major gaining commands. This paper will explore some of these initiatives and discuss the implications and ramifications of their impact on the success of the United States "War on Drugs."

Before individual recommendations can be presented, it is necessary to look at the future force structure of the military and how the budget enters into the ability of the services to carry out their missions.⁵ This is a question that has yet to be answered with changes occurring daily. With the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the threat to the United States has dramatically changed. The individual

services are struggling with how to redefine the threat and then to recommend a restructured force capable of countering that threat. Within that framework is the announced policy of the president that the drug war has the highest peacetime priority for the Department of Defense. The services remain reluctant to devote a significant portion of their rapidly dwindling budgets to a mission that does not fit the classic mold of a military mission. There is no argument that the military possesses the capability to dramatically affect the drug trade. The concern is how that will influence their abilities to carry out their primary mission of maintaining the security of the United States and its allies. To put this in the proper perspective it will be necessary for the military planners, at all levels, to rethink ways of doing business and develop plans to attack this newly defined threat. This will not be easy and will require a radically different approach to Department of Defense planning.

Each service is working diligently, reacting to the ever changing political and economic environment, attempting to restructure its force to allow the American public to get the most for the money. The Air Force Reserve is an integral part of the military picture and can pursue policies and structure requirements that will allow its members to maintain their readiness while making lasting contributions to the overall policies of the government. This will require some innovative

thinking and adaptive approaches to ensure that the entire spectrum of their mission can be completed.

MISSION OF THE AIR FORCE RESERVE

Training for mobilization and combat readiness is the critical activity for the reserve components.⁶ The mission of the Air Force Reserve is to ensure that a trained and ready force is continually maintained, equipped, funded and capable of fulfilling the orders of the President and the Secretary of Defense. The reserve component of the Air Force has much less time available to achieve this readiness than does its active duty counterparts. Many factors contribute to reducing the time available to the individual reservist as he/she trains to maintain this readiness. Excessive administrative requirements, lack of equipment, and lack of access to suitable training opportunities all add to the difficult task of maintaining a highly motivated, competent, and capable force, ready at a moment's notice, to aid in protecting the national security of the United States. Realistic training is imperative to ensure that the objectives of the service can be carried out. The fight against drugs provides reserve training opportunities that not only present realistic training for the individuals, but also contribute directly to the stated mission of the military concerning the drug war.⁷ Whether it is the civil engineer

building temporary airfield facilities, the security policeman providing special operation training to civilian law enforcement personnel, or the aircrew member loading equipment and delivering it to an overseas location, the realistic training that is a by-product of this operational requirement is extremely valuable.

REGULATORY AND LEGAL CONSTRAINTS

The Posse Comitatus Act is applicable to the Army and the Air Force directly and to the Navy and Marine Corps by policy. This act prohibits Department of Defense personnel from enforcing the civil law in the United States. Military assistance must be limited to the support of a law enforcement agency by enhancing its effectiveness. Military personnel are prohibited from searching, seizing, arresting, or performing any associated actions involving civilians. The act does not apply to operations outside the United States where the military may participate in the arrest of persons indicted under United States controlled substance laws. This provision is an interpretation and has not been tested or ruled on by the courts.⁸

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GUIDANCE

The Department of Defense works with other federal agencies, namely the Department of State, and U.S. law enforcement to attack all aspects of the problem.⁹ The national objective of reducing the flow of illegal drugs is being carried out through the use of all resources, working within the legal constraints of our system. To meet this objective, U.S. agencies are cooperating with foreign countries in supporting their internal and external policies toward stemming the drug trade. The Department of Defense is assisting in the attempt to halt the supply of drugs at the source. The majority of illegal drugs are produced in countries other than the United States.¹⁰ The military can offer assistance to host countries through operational support and cooperation with internal agencies to aid in preventing drug exports. The reinforcement of foreign governments enables them to more effectively wage their internal fights against drug producing organizations. The U.S. military can offer considerable assistance in training, reconnaissance, command and control, intelligence and logistical support to both civilian and governmental forces in host countries as they attempt to eliminate the problem at the source. This support is designed to increase the effectiveness of foreign forces and not as a replacement for the locally controlled agencies.

The second phase of the Department of Defense support is an attempt to cut off the flow of drugs while they are in transit to the United States, both outside the U.S. and at the borders and ports of entry.¹¹ The Department of Defense is the single lead agency of the Federal Government for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime shipment of illegal drugs to the United States. Units of the U.S. armed forces are deployed to interdict and deter the flow of drugs. This has the effect of complicating the logistics facing the illegal traffickers, thereby dramatically increasing their costs and requiring substantial changes in their methods of shipment. Initial efforts are being directed at attacking the problem in the Caribbean Sea area and along the southern border of the United States. This requires substantial cooperation between federal, local, and state agencies and the military in the area of command and control. The expertise of the military forces in these areas will dramatically increase the effectiveness of the agencies responsible for controlling entry into our country.

The third area that involves the U.S. military is the attack on the problem within the United States.¹² The military is being used to reduce the supply and the demand for illegal drugs. The Department of Defense assists agencies with training, reconnaissance, intelligence, and equipment. It continues to enforce the strict inhouse standards that have effectively reduced the use of drugs by members of the uniformed

services. These programs are made available to other agencies and personnel are trained by Department of Defense experts in their already proven effective methods. Facilities within the Department of Defense are available to federal and local departments that request use of these facilities.

It has been necessary to outline this guidance to understand the scope of support that the military is tasked to provide. Many aspects of the traditional military mission lend themselves, with little modification, to the extremely important and difficult task of fighting drug use. The focus of our military services is shifting from the enemy they have trained to overcome, to the much less defined and more difficult to identify drug trafficker. Innovative and resourceful approaches are important as the coordinated attack is carried out. The military, including the reserve services, has the potential to play a decisive role in the fight against an enemy that, if not checked, has the manpower, resources, and resolve to cause as much harm to the people of the United States as any enemy we have faced. We have taken on all adversaries in the past, with exceptional results, and must direct all necessary efforts to defeat this latest enemy.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AIR FORCE RESERVE

The Air Force Reserve can contribute in almost all areas of support in the fight against illegal drug use and supply. I will present individual instances where support is being provided and areas that can be expanded in line with the Federal Government's stated policies. As discussed earlier the Air Force Reserve has, as its primary objective, the requirement to maintain a combat force ready to perform its military mission at the direction of the President. To attain and maintain this readiness it is necessary to carry out an on-going training program designed to meet the needs of the individual members, within the time constraints of the part-time citizen soldier.

It is absolutely imperative that this force be equipped with modern equipment, provided with adequate funds and supported, when needed by the gaining commands. For the most part the members of the Air Force Reserve have identical training and currency requirements as their active duty counterparts. They must maintain these standards in relatively few training days per month or per year. This makes it essential that all available performance opportunities are used, mandating that the reservists structure their training to take advantage of all available time. Often, productive training must be individually tailored to the needs of a particular member. On the other hand, there are several operational requirements that

also must be completed. The combination of these needs and opportunities is the area that can be structured to provide the greatest benefits to both the reservist and the nation.

Let's look at the requirements and training accomplished by the strategic aircrew members and the opportunity to marry the operational requirements with the time available. Each aircrew member must perform a certain number of events to maintain his or her combat readiness. These requirements are not reserve unique, but follow hand-in-hand with the requirements of the active duty forces. Sorties are required periodically to ensure that proficiency is maintained. It only makes sense that these currency items should be accomplished in the most realistic and cost effective manner available. The funding provided to the individual units must be managed to get a complete spectrum of experience for as many members as possible. The most realistic training is actually loading and transporting wartime cargo and personnel on a routine basis. This is where the opportunity to combine the real-world mission of support for the fight against drugs and the need for training of reserve aircrew members can be combined. Federal agencies tasked with actual front line support are constantly in need of fast, reliable, low cost transportation for personnel and equipment. Reserve units throughout the country have the required assets and the operational need to carry actual cargo.

In the past the bureaucratic red tape has been a formidable roadblock in the effort to combine the need with the assets. Now that the fight against drugs has been elevated to such a high priority it is much easier to provide the needed support.

Every month the reserve support through the airlift system increases, providing important and productive training as well as efficient movement of federal manpower. During the months of November and December 1991 the Air Force Reserve provided transportation support to a variety of counterdrug agencies. A total of over 155 hours of flying time were used to transport various users to the Caribbean, Central America, and within the United States. This, supported customers such as CINCSOUTH, USCS, DEA, and others.¹³ Reserve aircrews and ground support personnel received valuable and productive training while contributing directly to one of the most valuable missions of the Air Force. This is only the tip of the iceberg and aggressive efforts must be continued to ensure that all opportunities are pursued and completed. The trend is continuing this year with a dramatic increase in the estimated hours that will be devoted to the counterdrug efforts.

The Air Force Reserve support is not confined to the strategic airlift crews by any means. Many other units have also entered the arena of supporting the effort against the movement of drugs into the United States. In the area of special operations, support is provided in surveillance and

intelligence expertise.¹⁴ Aircraft are used to seek out and identify potential illegal activities in the areas of cultivation and transportation of drugs. Sophisticated equipment designed for use against enemy forces has been adapted for use in locating, identifying, and tracking potential illegal activities. In addition to carrying out an actual mission requirement these aircrew members are receiving valuable training and experience directly related to their wartime mission. This type of utilization of equipment, personnel, and time give the greatest benefit to all concerned. It is much more valuable training than simulated missions against invisible targets.

Maritime patrol is another area that provides reserve crews with very realistic training directly related to the wartime mission of their unit. AFRES (Air Force Reserve) crews perform maritime surveillance when needed, tracking and following identified suspicious air and surface craft in the Caribbean area of responsibility. Both reserve training funds and operational dollars from other federal users are expended in maintaining the availability and capability of these reserve crews.

Special operations units are used to assist in the eradication efforts against marijuana growers here in the United States. They transport federal agents to remote locations, provide equipment and supplies, in addition to spraying known

and identified marijuana fields in U.S. National Parks and forests.¹⁵

The Air Force Reserve support encompasses all aspects of the missions required by every discipline of the force. The expertise of the personnel in the reserve components has been proven continuously in the past. This vast wealth of experience has provided excellent support and operational training of outside agencies, as well as enhancing its own readiness.

An extremely important part of the counterdrug program provided by the Air Force Reserve is training for civilian, state, and federal law enforcement personnel. AFRES security police teams have trained civilian law enforcement agencies in life-saving skills. Narcotics squads, drug eradication teams, and special weapons and tactics teams are a few of the units that are trained by reserve personnel in areas directly related to their wartime missions. A varied curriculum including basic survival skills, team movements, navigation, target engagement, and raid planning draws upon the skills that the military reservist has developed over the years. The skills many reservists possess are backed by years of operational experience and honed by instructing regularly. They can, and do, provide outstanding instruction in fields where very few civilians have the necessary experience needed.

Each month hundreds of civilian and federal law enforcement members are trained at reserve locations in the use of firearms.

Reserve Combat Arms training personnel provide the instruction and firing range control to allow officers to practice their firearms proficiency. These units have extensive ranges that can accommodate both small arms training as well as automatic weapons practice. Many civilian agencies do not have the necessary access to practice ranges needed to ensure their personnel maintain proficiency in the sophisticated weapons used in the fight against drugs.

With the weapons training, Air Force Reserve Security Police units provide drug dog certification and recertification for other agencies. Drug detector dogs belonging to state agencies are brought to the individual reserve locations, trained, exercised and certified. The military provides the valuable instructor resources and specially constructed facilities thereby enabling the civilian departments to concentrate their funds on other critical areas. These activities tie directly into the mission of the particular reserve units involved. The instructors maintain their individual proficiency while teaching the latest state-of-the-art techniques. Facilities designed to house wartime missions or support activities are used to the benefit of the civilian counterparts while simultaneously allowing reserve personnel to exercise their readiness training activities.

In addition to the activities outlined above, the Air Force Reserve has provided support in many other areas to both military and civilian departments. Night vision goggles, expensive to obtain and costly to maintain, have been loaned to civilian law enforcement agencies by reserve units located in their communities.¹⁶ These goggles have proven to be invaluable during surveillance and interdiction operations. Instead of maintaining these units in storage throughout the month, they are now being productively used at little or no expense to the civilian agencies.

The United States drug enforcement agencies have confiscated numerous vehicles, to include cars, trucks, planes and boats, in the battle against the flow of drugs. Air Force Reserve units have utilized their facilities to provide storage for this confiscated property.¹⁷ While on the surface this seems like a small contribution, it can be an enormous administrative headache to the local agencies that are already crowding their limited and expensive storage yards. The reserve unit provides the space and security until the vehicles can be disposed of by the civilian agencies.

Recently, in Texas, thirty-four members of a Narcotics Control Program were trained by an Air Force Reserve unit in all aspects of tactical field operations. They were provided expert guidance and hands on experience in small unit tactics, urban raid operations, booby trap detection and neutralization,

individual and team movement, building entry and search techniques, and advance shooting techniques. During the same training session 5,440 rounds of ammunition were expended to reinforce the valuable training received.¹⁸ In this case, as in many others, reserve facilities were utilized at no cost to the agency and reserve personnel were used performing their primary training mission. Both sides gained from the experience reinforcing the partnership that exists between the Air Force Reserve and the civilian community. These examples are only a few of the hundreds of activities supported by the Air Force Reserve in its new role as a primary participant in the War on Drugs.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

As outlined earlier, the Air Force Reserve has entered the arena with enthusiasm and has attacked the problems of funding and manpower with unique and innovative methods. The future of the military, not only in the area of drug enforcement, but the overall structure of the forces remains in doubt. The constant battles and reassessments of the threat have left the military planners with numerous problems. The force structure of the future is a vital element that must be answered before a credible drug control policy can be established and executed. The commitment of the President, the Congress, and the Secretary

of Defense cannot be over stated. Despite the reductions in funding that translates into fewer personnel and reduced funds available for training, the services have continued to support the requirement for military expertise in the on-going War on Drugs. The Air Force Reserve has joined the battle with enthusiasm and ever increasing expenditures in both material and manpower.

To headline this support an office was created within the Headquarters unit at AFRES located at Robins AFB, Georgia.¹⁹ This full-time counterdrug staff consists of representatives from operations, security police and civil engineering. All aspects of Air Force Reserve support will be coordinated through this single office to ensure the most efficient cost effective use of resources. Now that a specific office has been designated as the single point-of-contact it is necessary for the experts in the field to provide their experience to that office to ensure efforts are not being duplicated. The members of the reserve units throughout the country bring many unique talents to this fight.

The war fighting skills of the Air Force Reservist have been demonstrated over and over again, most recently during the conflict in the Persian Gulf. There can be no doubt regarding the commitment of these dedicated individuals to their role as citizen soldiers. In addition to their outstanding records within the military they are equally dedicated and professional

in their civilian occupations. The entire spectrum of careers is covered when reviewing reserve participants' backgrounds. Because of this vast and varied experience many members can bring expertise within the drug area to their reserve units. Tapping this expertise is essential for not only the Air Force Reserve, but also for the country. All aspects of the problem must be attacked if we are ever going to get this potentially devastating enemy under control. Reserve members are answering the call, donating numerous hours of their time to get the message across to the communities where they live. They are speaking at community meetings, lecturing at schools and presenting anti-drug messages to audiences of all types. It is imperative that, in this time of reduced funds, their resources be fully utilized.

Operational support through official channels can be expanded. The counterdrug staff at Headquarters AFRES has the correct mix of planners available to ensure an optimum use of Air Force Reserve assets. Operational and maintenance dollars can be used to fulfill both war readiness and drug support activities. As described earlier training requirements are fulfilled by combining these two vitally necessary components. The efforts must continue as the demands on limited resources increase. The Air Force Reserve is a ready and willing player in the attack on this incessant and debilitating menace. The resources of those advancing the use of drugs are not minimal.

It will take all the energies and commitments this country can muster to begin to reverse the growth of the drug trade. The military will continue to remain a primary participant despite the restructuring of its forces and reduction of funds.

As an integral part of the Total Force, the Air Force Reserve will continue its support of the gaining commands and its direct support to the mission through unique and innovative methods. The challenge for the future is not if the country can afford to support the fight, but to what extent can the complete spectrum of resources be marshalled to ensure that we will defeat this current enemy. The fight has been joined and the commitments outlined. Through an aggressive approach it is possible to use the strengths of the military while still ensuring the war fighting abilities we must possess are retained and refined. We must step up to this, possibly our most demanding and far-reaching, mission and lead the fight and win this "War on Drugs."

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